

LAW ENFORCEMENT NEWS

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

Two-time murderer sentenced to death for killing 16-year-old

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A man convicted of kidnaping and killing a 16-year-old Kansas City, Mo., girl was sentenced to death, following his jury trial, which was prosecuted by United States Attorney Todd P. Graves and Deputy U.S. Attorney Matt J. Whitworth.

Wesley Ira Purkey, 51, was found guilty on Nov. 5, 2003, of the interstate kidnaping of Jennifer Long for the purpose of forcible rape, resulting in her death. The sentencing phase of that trial began Monday, Nov. 10, 2003. The jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., deliberated 10 hours over two days before returning the death penalty verdict to U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr. The court formally sentenced Purkey on Jan. 23, 2004.

"The death penalty affirms the value we place on human life," Graves said in his closing argument. "The murder of a child is an unspeakable act. This defendant is uniquely deserving of the death penalty."

Purkey forcibly kidnaped 16-year-old Jennifer Long and transported her from Kansas City, Mo., to Lansing, Kan., where he raped her on Jan. 22, 1998. After stabbing her to death, Graves said, Purkey hid her body in a tool box and eventually used a chain saw to dismember her body, then burned the remains in a fireplace.

Purkey was already serving a life sentence in Kansas for the 1998 murder of an elderly woman, whom he bludgeoned to death with a hammer, when he admitted his crime to law enforcement officers on Dec. 16, 1998. Purkey feared spending the rest of his life in the Kansas Department of Corrections, he told officers, and hoped to be moved to a federal penitentiary as a result of his confession to the federal kidnaping charge.

This case was investigated by the FBI, and the Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas Police Departments.

FBI computer forensics laboratory opens to aid region's investigators

New tools provide means to investigate child exploitation cases

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The United States Attorney's Office participated in the grand opening ceremony of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory last quarter.

"This laboratory brings the United States Attorney's Office one step closer to being a national leader in the prosecution of computer crimes," U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves said, following the event.

The Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory has been in the planning stages since October 2000.

The new facility will now partner with the office's Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit in the investigation and prosecution of several different types of computer crimes in the region. The computer forensics laboratory is located at 4150 N. Mulberry, in Kansas City.

The computer forensics laboratory will be used in the prosecution of child pornography cases, computer hacking cases, cyber-trespassing cases, copyright infringement cases and identity theft cases, Graves said.

"We will see federal, state and local agencies working together to fight computer crimes so that these types of criminals are kept from hurting our children, families and community," Graves said.

On Oct. 10, 2002, Graves, along with United States Attorney General John Ashcroft, FBI Special Agent In Charge Kevin Stafford and Col. Roger D. Stottlemire of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, announced the creation of the new Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit, which has been successful in prosecuting a steady case load of child exploitation cases. The Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit aggressively pursues those who use the Internet to sexually coerce or entice children and those who possess, produce or distribute child pornography. The unit also handles computer intrusions ("hacking"), intellectual property offenses and Internet fraud cases.

The Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit will make full use of this new computer forensics laboratory, which will employ 14 full-time computer examiners making it the premier computer forensics lab in the Midwest, Graves said. Not only will the investigators extract evidence, but the lab will also train law enforcement officers and prosecutors so that they better understand how to seize and present evidence. The new laboratory will be available to local, state and federal law enforcement.

The new computer forensics lab's executive board is comprised of the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Kansas, the FBI, the Johnson County, Kan., Sheriff's Office, The Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Lawrence, Kan., Police Department, the Lenexa, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and the Overland Park, Kan., Police Department.



U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves interviews with a Kansas City television station at the Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory. The new lab provides investigators a number of new tools to help them fight child exploitation and other types of computer crimes.

